

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE ...

To assure that both prospective and experienced Resource Families would feel needed and respected from that very first phone call through their career of caring for children?

- Every phone call inquiring about kin care, fostering or adopting would be answered by a warm, welcoming human voice and the person calling would receive a prompt, competent and respectful response.
- The phone call would be followed up with more detailed information. When the caller has indicated an interest in responding to a high need (caring for teens, sibling groups, medically fragile children etc.) a home visit will convey the children's need and the agency's appreciation.
- The social worker who will do the family's homestudy will introduce herself in one of the early training sessions. She will be there to answer their questions, direct them to experienced Resource Families who can offer support and advice and, if the family is absent from a session, she will call them to let them know that they were missed and how much they are needed.
- Staff members from other departments would attend each of the training sessions to answer questions about their roles with the children in custody and with the Resource Families and to learn more about the roles of Resource Families.
- The potential Resource Families are tracked from their first phone call through their placement experiences to determine at what point families are dropping out and to inquire about what services might have permitted them to continue.
- The Director of the agency, County Commissioners and other key community members visit the training sessions to carry the message about the value of the Resource Families and the irreplaceable role they play in fulfilling the agency's mission.
- Business cards, news stories and *all* other communication from the agency would carry messages about the value of the current Resource Families and the need for additional families.
- Both new and experienced Resource Families would be prepared to care for the children and work with their families by competent, sensitive trainers. The training is realistic, accessible and flexible to accommodate diversity. It is also interactive, entertaining and informative in order to accommodate the needs of most adult learners.
- Prior to placement the assigned social worker secures and shares all information available about the child from interviews with parents, child, teachers etc; from information secured in the Team Decision Making Meeting and from a review of any medical/educational records that are available.
- When the Resource Family is unknown to the child he would be shown any pictures that are available and given a description of the house, occupants and pets while waiting for placement.

AND WHAT ELSE COULD YOU DO TO SUPPORT RESOURCE FAMILIES?